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January 7, 1993

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Clinton's home church to provide musical groups for inauguration

Baptist Press
1/7/93

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--The sanctuary choir and brass quintet of Little Rock's Immanuel Baptist Church will participate in inaugural ceremonies in honor of President-elect Bill Clinton.

And Southern Baptist evangelist Billy Graham has accepted an invitation to offer the invocation and benediction at Clinton's inauguration Jan. 20. Graham has participated in inaugural ceremonies on six other occasions.

Immanuel's sanctuary choir will participate in a praise and worship service at First Baptist Church of Washington, Tuesday evening, Jan. 19. The choir will sing several selections during the worship service. Its director is Lynn Madden, associate pastor for music media.

The praise and worship service was specifically requested by Clinton and his wife, Hillary, and Vice President-elect Al Gore and wife, Tipper. Clinton has been a member of the Immanuel sanctuary choir since joining the church in 1980.

In addition to the Clintons and Gores, several members and their families of the cabinet will be in attendance as well as senators, representatives and several Southern Baptist leaders. Composer-pianist Ken Medema also will be featured in the service.

The Immanuel brass quintet, at the request of the Clintons, will play for an ecumenical service Wednesday morning, Jan. 20.

The choir and quintet both have participated in Clinton's gubernatorial inaugurations.

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Controversial prof Simmons retires at Southern Seminary By David R. Wilkinson

Baptist Press
1/7/93

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Paul D. Simmons has taken early retirement from his teaching position at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the wake of a film he showed to a class in December that sparked controversy over its sexual content.

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Simmons submitted a letter to seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt Jan. 6 announcing his retirement effective retroactively to Dec. 31. Simmons's decision abruptly ended a 22-year career as an ethics professor at the Louisville, Ky., school.

Simmons, 56, has faced mounting pressure in recent years from seminary trustees who disagree with his pro-choice views on abortion. The last in a series of attempts to resolve the conflict failed Dec. 15 when trustees at a called meeting in Atlanta soundly defeated a proposal from their academic personnel committee to buy out Simmons's teaching contract.

After the closed-door meeting, Honeycutt told reporters the trustees' decision put efforts to resolve the issue "back to ground zero." Several trustees speculated publicly that formal charges of dismissal would be filed against Simmons in the coming months.

Since that meeting, however, new controversy flared suddenly on a different front. Near the end of the fall semester, Simmons showed an explicit video on disabled persons and sexuality to a masters-level class on "The Church and Sexuality."

When several students from the class registered formal complaints, the matter was placed under administrative review. Before the review was completed, however, Simmons announced his decision to retire.

Honeycutt said seminary officials had not requested Simmons's resignation and that the formal action under consideration in response to the classroom incident did not include dismissal.

"Dr. Simmons has been a productive and effective member of the seminary faculty," Honeycutt said. "In more than two decades of teaching ministry on this campus, students and faculty colleagues have admired him for his commitment to integrity, his dedication to teaching and his devotion to Christ."

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Texas Baptists securing blankets
for needy in Bosnia-Herzegovina

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
1/7/93

DALLAS (BP)--At the Pentagon's request, Texas Baptist Men immediately is securing at least 25,000 blankets to be distributed by non-governmental humanitarian groups this winter in war-torn Bosnia-Herzegovina.

And within a few weeks, the statewide Southern Baptist missions organization plans to play a major role in collecting more than a half-million blankets for citizens of that troubled Eastern European country.

Bob Dixon, TBM executive director, received a fax message Jan. 4 from Robert K. Wolthuis, deputy assistant secretary for global affairs, U.S. Department of Defense, citing needs in the former Yugoslavia and asking for help in securing blankets.

"The need for blankets during this winter season has become critical," Wolthuis wrote. "A large percentage of the homes are without heat or electricity. Blankets and cold weather clothing are the main source of protection against the cold for most Bosnians."

Wolthuis explained that the Department of Defense had exhausted its supply of excess blankets and he asked that Texas Baptists help to secure "vast quantities" of blankets as soon as possible.

"My office will transport any donated blankets to assembly points in the United States and airlift them to Zagreb, Split and Sarejevo for distribution through NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and international organizations," he wrote.

In conversations with representatives from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Dixon learned that up to 600,000 blankets are needed.

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Dixon made an initial commitment for 25,000 blankets to meet the most immediate needs. The blankets are being made available to TBM by Beacon Manufacturing of North Carolina for less than \$3 each.

Persons wishing to purchase blankets for Bosnia-Herzegovina should designate checks "disaster relief," payable to Baptist Executive Board, and send them to the Treasurer's Office, Baptist General Convention of Texas, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, TX 75246-1798.

Within the next two weeks, TBM also plans to set up collection points throughout Texas so individuals wishing to donate blankets or winter coats they have purchased themselves may do so. Ultimately, Dixon hopes the total number of blankets donated through Texas Baptist Men will exceed a half-million.

Currently, he is working with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and the military to help network the delivery relief system within Bosnia-Herzegovina with the hope that Baptist workers might be among those offering relief.

Already, Texas Baptist involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina is following a path remarkably similar to ministry among Kurdish Iraqi refugees less than two years ago.

In 1991, after the Pentagon saw how TBM marshalled medical aid to respond to a cholera epidemic in Peru, the Department of Defense contacted Dixon asking that Texas Baptists secure at least 12,000 blankets for Kurdish refugees along the border of Iraq.

Ultimately, Southern Baptists purchased 34,400 blankets -- including 14,400 secured by TBM -- that were airlifted to Kurdish refugee camps by the military.

That initial request for blankets for Kurds also led to Southern Baptist involvement in medical aid and food assistance in southern Turkey and northern Iraq and to emergency food service operations in western Iran.

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Florida-produced documentary
to recount Andrew ministries

Baptist Press
1/7/93

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--"When the Storms Passed By," a documentary about Southern Baptists' response to Hurricane Andrew in Florida and Louisiana, as well as Hurricane Iniki in Hawaii, will be shown on the ACTS/VISN and Family Net cable systems Jan. 30 at 10 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

The in-depth report presents the initial impact of the hurricane on the states and the ongoing ministry of Southern Baptist churches to local residents.

The hour-long documentary includes a segment on the 500-plus construction volunteers from North Carolina who rebuilt homes in south Florida over the New Year's holiday and summarizes the continuing needs in Florida.

Produced by the media services department of the Jacksonville-based Florida Baptist Convention, the program is probably one of the "rare occasions" a state organization has produced a documentary for a national audience, said Ty Wood, director of the department.

According to Wood, producing the piece gave him a new appreciation for Southern Baptists. "As I began looking at this nationally, I received a fresh insight into Southern Baptists and how we can almost simultaneously respond to three national disasters on the scope that we did.

"We had the financial resources, the trained volunteers and urgency to respond. The effort was organized and well coordinated. While others were slow to get into place, we were there almost immediately meeting needs."

The ACTS/VISN Network can be seen on 1,200 plus cable systems with a viewership of 20 million households. In Florida, the network is on 42 cable systems. Viewers should check local listings for cable channel numbers.

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**AMA council opposes notifying
parents of teens seeking abortion** By Louis Moore

NASHVILLE (BP)--The American Medical Association's Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs has gone on record against mandatory parental notification or consent for minors seeking abortion.

In a report published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Jan. 6, the council concluded, "while minors should be encouraged to discuss their pregnancy with their parents and other adults, minors should not be required to involve their parents before deciding whether to undergo an abortion."

The report cites the need for privacy in the physician-patient relationship and the risk of abuse of minors whose parents learn they are pregnant as ethical reasons for their decision. Legal considerations in states in which parental notification or permission is not required also weighed heavily in the council's report.

"While not surprising, the report is very troubling," said C. Ben Mitchell, director of biomedical and life issues for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Mitchell voiced a number of concerns:

"First, it is true that some children are physically and emotionally abused when their parents learn they are pregnant," he said. "But that is a symptom, not the problem. The decision of the council reflects more an emotional response to the issues than an ethical or medical response. For instance, the council does not mention post-abortion trauma or the fact that, for instance, in mid-trimester abortions the medical risks are so great that as many as one of every 200 patients will have severe hemorrhaging, require hysterectomies, or will die. Failure to inform parents of these kinds of risks is a breach of physician responsibility.

"Second, I am very concerned about the social implications of some of the notions found in the report. For instance, the council concluded that minors are the best persons to decide whether parental involvement is advisable. Now, admittedly, that may be so in a small number of cases, but as a general rule it is highly overstated. In the overwhelming majority of cases, parents or parents with their children are in a far better position to make wise judgments with respect to abortion."

Michael K. Whitehead, general council for the Christian Life Commission, questions the rationale of the panel of experts as well.

"Totally absent from this 'scientific' report is any mention of experts and evidence to support the opposing view," he said. "Does the AMA ask us to assume there is no evidence supporting the view that the lack of parental involvement may harm the minor?"

"There is no mention of 'botched abortions' which may do permanent physical harm to the child. There is no mention of psychological damage done to children who are able to conceal the abortion from parents before the fact but who, after the abortion, break under the weight of guilt and anger. Does the AMA believe that parents will be less angry when they discover the abortion after the fact?"

Most distressing, Whitehead said, is the way in which the report will be used in the courts. "The AMA report will become a legal standard to establish whether doctors acted with reasonable care in performing such abortions without notifying parents. If a young girl has an abortion without telling her parents, but suffers serious damage physically or emotionally, her parents may file suit against the physician for malpractice. Any allegation that the failure to notify the parents before the abortion resulted in injury to the patient will be met with this report, offered as evidence by defense attorneys, that the doctor acted within the reasonable standard of good medical practice.

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Mitchell said, "I am not entirely surprised, but it still amazes me that a minor has to have parental permission to take over-the-counter medication at school but does not have to have her parents' permission, or even notify them in some cases, to have an invasive medical procedure like an abortion. There is simply something intellectually schizophrenic about that. Clearly, most Americans support parental notification and consent."

An independent poll commissioned by Parade Magazine in May 1992 indicated of those polled between the ages of 18 and 65, almost 80 percent said one or more parents should be notified before an abortion is performed (31 percent said one parent should be notified; 48 percent said both).

Those figures are in keeping with a September 1992 USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup poll which found more than 70 percent of those polled favor restrictions on abortion, including requiring doctors to tell women about the risks of abortion and alternatives, 24-hour waiting periods and parental consent for minors.

The JAMA report also includes a one-page state-by-state summary of parental notification and parental consent laws. While governor of Arkansas, President-elect Bill Clinton signed a parental notice law into effect in Arkansas but says he does not support a federal mandatory parental notification law.

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Southern Baptist teacher wins
friends at posh Chinese hotel By Lounette Templeton

Baptist Press
1/7/93

BEIJING, China (BP)--The smartly dressed blonde walking through the lobby of the Beijing Lido Holiday Inn looks like a sophisticated tourist.

She's not. She's Susan Harralson, a hotel staff member. She's also a kindergarten teacher in Nortonville, Ky., and member of First Baptist Church in Madisonville, Ky.

The job surprised Harralson as much as anybody. When she first investigated overseas service, she was prepared to raise her own support for a job anywhere.

She never dreamed an international hotel chain would need a kindergarten principal in China. The Lido provides preschool education for the international community in Beijing. Since the hotel pays her salary, she didn't even have to raise her own support.

Before she went to China, Harralson, who has a master's degree in early childhood education, had taught for 13 happy years in Nortonville. "I loved where I was," said Harralson, a Southern Baptist. "But after a trip to South America, I felt God wanted something more of me."

How does her job at the posh Chinese hotel fulfill that desire? Harralson sees the work as an opportunity to put her Christian life on the line and demonstrate what she believes.

"They know I'm a Christian and I want them to see a difference in me," she explained.

From all indications, a difference is exactly what others see. At an executive staff meeting Harralson attended soon after she arrived in China, she overheard her name mentioned in a Chinese-language discussion.

"I heard them talking about 'Miss Susan' but I didn't know why," she said. Later she learned the hotel manager was urging the staff to follow her example in maintaining good relations with the workers.

Chinese television featured the school on a special program in 1991. The Lido preschool has a reputation as an elite school for children of diplomats and businessmen.

But Harralson's job isn't all that luxurious. A normal workday runs nine hours and she works six days a week.

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"It was a big adjustment," she admits. "Living in the hotel is like being on duty all the time." Most of her small charges live in hotel apartments, which means she is not only their teacher but their neighbor as well. Harralson loves China but misses the family and church support she enjoyed back home. Her Beijing colleagues, she learned quickly, don't hold her Christian values. "I realized I didn't have anyone to depend on except God. I said, 'It's me and you, God.'"

Yet she prizes the relationships she has developed with the Chinese and expatriate staff. Harralson makes good use of the several hours the staff is on duty after the children leave. She has taught aerobics, English, even fashion and makeup classes.

Her secretary, Emily Sun, said the Chinese workers appreciate Harralson's interest in them.

When Harralson first came, Sun said she was prepared to like her, perhaps because her father had passed on his appreciation of Americans. She wasn't disappointed.

"We love her very much," she said. "Susan is so kind and helpful and generous. We have a very special relationship. I know she's a Christian. I don't have a background in Christianity so I don't understand about it very well, but I'm interested. Sometimes I ask her questions and she tells me stories from the Bible."

When Harralson completed her two-year contract last June, the hotel management promised her a higher staff rating if she would remain. The dilemma she faced was obvious to her friend Sun.

"Susan was just standing in the middle," Sun said. "She loved China and she loved her job back home."

China won. The hotel thinks it convinced her to stay another year but anyone who knows Harralson knows what kept her in China.

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet Newsroom.

Young pastor's church by the wharf
led to national seaman's ministry By Kevin Devine

Baptist Press
1/7/93

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Illuminated by the muted late afternoon sun, John Vandercook's living room is National Geographic come alive.

In shadowed corners and on high shelves rest artifacts of distant lands: a fierce warrior's mask from Namibia, a delicate porcelain doll from Japan, finely crafted rosewood elephants from India.

These items and dozens more would indicate this is the home of a man who has traveled the world. In the case of Vandercook, however, it is the world which has come to him.

As the recently retired founder and director of the New Orleans Baptist Seaman's Service, Vandercook has seen countless thousands of men from around the globe climb the narrow concrete stairs to his home in a quiet residential area of New Orleans. For 30 years they have come in search of encouragement, direction and fellowship, leaving behind the small expressions of gratitude which now fill the Vandercook home.

The Baptist Seaman's Service was started in the winter of 1962-63 and incorporated in 1964 in New Orleans, one of the world's most trafficked and internationally used ports. The ministry has risen to the challenge of meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of merchant seamen from virtually every seafaring nation on earth, a daunting task, but one accomplished by meeting the modest needs of the moment.

"It will never cease to amaze me how grateful people are for something as simple as a kind word or quiet conversation when they are far from home," Vandercook recounted.

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Seated in a comfortable chair, the warrior's mask peering over his shoulder, Vandercook seems ideally suited for such service. Though far removed from his native Little Rock, Ark., he still radiates the warmth and approachable charm of his rural roots. These traits have served Vandercook well in a ministry where language is often a barrier and the strength of one's personality has to fill the void.

"When you can't speak to one another, an arm around a shoulder communicates very well," Vandercook said.

Growing up on the outskirts of Little Rock, Vandercook "heard lots of sermons, but the gospel never seemed to get through." It was only through a series of events after the outbreak of World War II that this young man from the country came to know Jesus.

"I enlisted in the Navy and soon after found myself in the South Pacific," Vandercook said. "My outfit managed to get in on a lot of the early island fighting. ... John Wayne is a favorite of mine but I can't watch those old war movies; we saw too much of the real thing."

After a year of "island hopping," Vandercook accepted the opportunity to attend Officers Candidate School, then located at Mississippi College in Clinton, Miss.

"The two most important relationships in my life were formed at Mississippi College," Vandercook said. The first relationship was with a young lady named Catherine Gunn, who within the year would become Mrs. John Vandercook. The second relationship was with Jesus.

"W.O. Vaught was preaching a revival at the college; after all those years, the Lord finally broke through to me and I was born again," Vandercook said.

Shortly after the war Vandercook left the service and came to realize his new lifestyle would be even more challenging than he first thought. Heeding God's call to full-time Christian service, Vandercook was ordained to the ministry in 1949 by First Baptist Church in Yazoo City, Miss. He enrolled as a student in the bachelor of divinity program at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary that year, but because of his active ministry he was not able to take the time to complete his degree.

During the 1950s Vandercook served as pastor to several churches in Louisiana and Mississippi; in the early 1960s he returned to New Orleans to become the pastor of the small congregation of Third Street Baptist Church. It was at Third Street Baptist, "hard by the river," as he described it, that his life's ministry came into focus.

"You could stand at the front door of the church and see the ships tied up at the docks only a few blocks away," said Vandercook of the Julia Street wharfs just upriver from Jackson Square and the French Quarter.

Encountering several seamen on the street one afternoon in 1962, Vandercook listened as the men told of the great spiritual need among their companions. Many seamen were far removed from a Christian lifestyle, either from ignorance or defiance, and desperately needed the witness of the gospel. Those who did know Christ, or those who were seeking him, felt stranded aboard ship because of transportation difficulties and the barrier of language.

Stirred by their plight, Vandercook led the Third Street church to begin a ministry to seamen. "We would go to the ships and personally invite the sailors to services and activities at the church," he said. With the church only a few blocks away, transportation proved no problem.

The language barrier also was easily breached, for in the early years the vast majority of seamen proved to be from Spanish-speaking countries; willing interpreters were easily found in a city where the Spanish influence reaches back over two centuries. Appreciative of the kindness of strangers, the initial trickle of sailors turned into a torrent flowing to and from the church. The first organized event the ministry offered was at Christmastime in 1962.

Within a year the sheer volume of the ministry threatened to overwhelm the tiny church, and Vandercook was faced with a heart-wrenching decision: watch the seaman's ministry struggle for lack of attention and resources or leave the church he loved to devote himself full-time to the seaman's ministry. On Aug. 1, 1964, Vandercook's living room officially became the site of the first full-time Southern Baptist seaman's ministry.

For the next 12 years the Vandercook home was the center of ministry activity. Each day Vandercook would make contact with newly arrived sailors, sharing the gospel and making arrangements for everything from doctor visits to sightseeing trips. Evenings were filled with Bible study, recreation and fellowship.

Through the years these efforts led to the expansion of the ministry to people of more than 40 language groups and, in 1976, the purchase and renovation of a facility to serve as the new home of the Seaman's Service.

In addition to the rigors of ministering to the many who climbed his steps night after night, Vandercook was a husband and father to four "rather active" children, he said. "(My children) have grown up with a very unique experience. ... They might experience Chinese culture one night, maybe Latin American or Europ an the next."

So much a part of family life was the seaman's ministry that Vandercook's youngest son, Philip, celebrated his first birthday with a party on the deck of a Liberian freighter. With the recent retirement of his father who has served as the first and only director of the Seaman's Service since its inception, Philip continues the family commitment to the ministry by succeeding his father as director. Philip also is a current master of divinity degree student at New Orleans Seminary.

The Seaman's Service -- now supported by the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board, state and associational funds, as well as direct gifts from local churches and individuals, has had influence reaching far beyond the docks on Julia Street.

"Once we began to have small successes in reaching merchant sailors with the gospel, the word began to spread to other Baptists living in port cities and we began to receive requests to share how the work was done," Vandercook said. When Vandercook's ministry became incorporated in 1964, Baptists had no organized work among seamen. Now, as a direct result of Vandercook's pioneering efforts, there are more than 30 Baptist seaman's centers in port cities around the United States.

These cities include Mobile, Ala.; Anchorage, Alaska; Los Angeles and Long Beach, Calif.; Wilmington, Del.; Jacksonville, Fort Lauderdale, Pensacola, Port Everglades and Tampa, Fla.; New Brunswick and Savannah, Ga.; Chicago; Burns Harbor, Ind.; Baton Rouge, Convent and Lake Charles, La.; Baltimore; Detroit; Gulfport and Pascagoula, Miss.; Camden, N.J.; Portland, Ore.; Philadelphia.; Georgetown and Charleston, S.C.; Brownsville, Freeport and Galveston, Texas; Norfolk and Richmond, Va.; and Everett, Wash.

After three decades of ministry, the joy and satisfaction Vandercook feels at having had the opportunity to serve others becomes obvious as he shares the story of a recent visitor to his home. A young man from India sat in the Vandercook living room and told of how both he and his family had dedicated their lives to Christ because of the witness of a young man's father. Vandercook related that the young man's father had been among the first to climb the narrow concrete stairs to the Vandercook home and hear the gospel. With a broad smile, Vandercook quietly said, "He is the reason we serve."

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Devine is a writer at New Orleans Seminary. (BP) photos available upon request from the seminary.

Family's escape from Vietnam
yields faith and a ministry

By Eva Wilson

GARDEN CITY, Kan. (BP)--When freedom was in sight, Thomas Tran turned back. After escaping from a prison camp in his native Vietnam, Tran had passed through Cambodia to Thailand, where a chance to escape communism awaited him.

"But I missed my family," Tran said. So he went back to Vietnam to find his wife, Sarah, his daughter, Thu Van, and his son, Vi Nhan.

Now living in Garden City, Kansas, and ministering to Vietnamese in Western Kansas Baptist Association, the Trans related their story during a recent interview at First Southern Baptist Church in Garden City.

(English as a second language classes for the Vietnamese are held on Monday nights at First Southern. Vicki Caddell is Vietnamese coordinator in Western Kansas Baptist Association. Her husband, Randy, is pastor of First Southern.)

After Tran found his family back in Vietnam, they set out to find freedom together. "They bought their way out," Vicki Caddell said.

The Trans paid a guide five ounces in gold per person to lead them across Cambodia to safety in Thailand.

But they got to the Thailand border and were captured by the Khmer Rouge, soldiers known for their brutality.

The Trans' son, Vi Nhan, was very ill, and a Red Cross doctor examined him. The doctor persuaded the Khmer Rouge to allow the boy and his mother to cross into Thailand by exchanging 20 25-pound bags of rice.

Meanwhile, the Khmer Rouge daily were selecting prisoners to kill, and the situation grew more tense.

But the Red Cross doctor intervened again by claiming that Vi Nhan was dying and persuaded the Khmer Rouge to release Thomas and his daughter, Thu Van. So more rice was exchanged.

However, when Thomas saw his son, the boy was running and playing. "In that time, I knew God was with me," said Tran, although he was not a Christian at the time.

The Trans were in a refugee camp in Thailand for two years. They were allowed two bowls of rice per person daily, along with a gallon of water and a teaspoon of soap. Once a week they received a can of fish.

Then they were accepted to immigrate to the United States, although Thomas had wanted to go to Australia.

Before going to the United States, they spent eight months in a refugee camp in the Philippines, where they were oriented to American life.

In the Philippine camp, Thomas began to worry about how he would survive in the United States. He had no job skills and couldn't speak English, so how could he find a job?

Southern Baptist missionaries minister in the Philippine refugee camps, and there are two Southern Baptist churches.

Thomas went by one of the churches and heard singing. He wondered why the people were happy when his heart was burdened.

So Thomas went into the church and met Vinh Le, a physician from Vietnam who was a Christian.

Thomas went to church a few times and decided he wanted a Bible. Southern Baptist missionary Doug Kellum asked Tran to memorize 20 verses before he received a Bible. So Thomas memorized 40 verses and got an English Bible and a Vietnamese Bible.

He accepted Christ as his Savior and was baptized in a stream. Then he went home and told his wife what he had done. But Sarah laughed at him and said she would believe her husband's faith was real if he quit drinking and smoking.

Thomas grew in his newfound faith, and Sarah saw he had truly changed. So she and daughter Thu Van also accepted Christ.

The Trans lost contact with their friend, Vinh Le, who came to the United States first. But they would see him again in Garden City.

After leaving the refugee camp in the Philippines, the Trans went to Wichita, Kan., where they stayed for a short time. They learned of job openings at the Iowa Beef Processors packing plant west of Garden City and decided to move.

In March 1991, a Vietnamese revival was held in Garden City. Vinh Le, who now pastors in Colorado, was the evangelist. On the last day of the revival, Le went to visit a Vietnamese family on his list. This family said they knew of a Christian Vietnamese family.

So Le called the family; it turned out to be the Trans. Le invited the Trans to the revival and a joyful reunion took place.

"They could not believe they were seeing each other again," Caddell said.

Several Vietnamese accepted Christ during the revival. And Vietnamese Sunday school classes, along with English-as-a-second-language classes, were started as a result of the revival.

During the Western Kansas association evangelism conference in the fall of 1991, Thomas and Sarah Tran made a public commitment to Christian service.

Now Tran was serving as lay pastor for the Vietnamese congregations in Garden City and Liberal and became a full-time pastor Jan. 1. His salary is funded through the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists and the Home Mission Board. Tran had been working six days a week at the IBP packing plant. However, he quit his job when he took the full-time pastorate.

On Sunday mornings, he leads the Vietnamese Sunday school class and worship service at First Southern Baptist Church in Garden City.

Before surrendering to the ministry, Tran worked in the evenings as a maintenance supervisor at a local mobile home park. Sarah Tran works as a meat inspector at IBP. Last February, her left foot was severely burned when a pan of hot oil overturned while she was making egg rolls.

She was off work for five months for surgery and skin grafts. But she is doing well now, Caddell said.

Despite such difficulties, the Trans have a heart for ministry. In the summers, they have a huge garden in their backyard and share the produce, Caddell said.

The Vietnamese Sunday school class in Garden City has grown from six to 45 on the roll, with an average attendance of 18-20. It is now a mission of First Southern, Garden City.

Then Tran travels to Liberal and works with the Vietnamese Sunday school class which meets at First Southern Baptist Church in that city. The class in Liberal has 35 enrolled, with 22-25 attending.

In April 1992, First Southern Baptist in Garden City licensed Tran to the gospel ministry. The church will ordain Tran on Jan. 17.

Tran has led the Vietnamese Sunday school class in Garden City to tithe and the group is building up a savings account.

They used the account to sponsor a family who wanted to immigrate from Vietnam.

The U.S. government publishes a list of "free cases," Vietnamese people who want to come to the United States but have no relatives or other connections here, Caddell explained.

So the Garden City group looked over the list and prayed about who they should sponsor. The family they chose arrived July 7 and began getting settled into life in Garden City.

Now paperwork is in process for sponsoring three additional families, Caddell said. One family was due to arrive in Garden City in December; the others are expected sometime after Jan. 1.

Both Vietnamese and Anglo churches in Western Kansas Baptist Association help provide supplies for the immigrant families. Since the Vietnamese ministry began in the association, 34 persons have accepted Christ and 11 have joined churches by letter.

Caddell estimates some 5,000 Southeast Asians are in Garden City, Liberal and Dodge City, attracted to the area by packing plant jobs.

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